



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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FCC ANNOUNCES THE MEMBERSHIP AND FIRST MEETING OF THE RE-CHARTERED TASK FORCE FOR REVIEWING THE CONNECTIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS OF PRECISION AGRICULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

GN Docket No. 19-329

This Public Notice serves as notice that, consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act¹ and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018,² Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, in consultation with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, has appointed members to serve on the re-chartered Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States (Precision Agriculture Connectivity Task Force or Task Force). The Task Force will hold the first meeting of its third and final term on **Wednesday, January 31, 2024, beginning at 10:00 am EST**. Notice of this meeting has been published in the Federal Register.³ This Public Notice also provides below a limited exemption from our *ex parte* rules, under authority of section 1.1200(a) of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 1.1200(a), for certain communications between Task Force and working group members and FCC staff or Commissioners.⁴

In its third term, the Task Force will continue its work to provide advice and recommendations to the Commission on accelerating the deployment of broadband Internet access service on unserved agricultural land to promote precision agriculture. The Task Force will perform duties and will submit a report consistent with sections 12511(b)(3)(A) and (b)(5) of the 2018 Farm Bill.⁵ Four working groups will assist the Task Force in carrying out its work: (1) Mapping and Analyzing Connectivity on Agricultural Lands; (2) Examining Current and Future Connectivity Demand for Precision Agriculture; (3) Encouraging Adoption of Precision Agriculture and Availability of High-Quality Jobs on Connected Farms; and (4) Accelerating Broadband Deployment on Unserved Agricultural Lands.⁶ Along with the

¹ Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. Ch. 10 (FACA).

² Pub. L. No. 115-334, 132 Stat. 4490 (2018 Farm Bill).

³ Federal Communications Commission, Federal Advisory Committee Act; Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States, 89 Fed. Reg. 1574 (Jan. 10, 2024).

⁴ See *FCC Announces the Membership of and First Meeting of the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States*, GN Docket No. 19-329, Public Notice, 34 FCC Rcd 10493 (WCB 2019) (providing a similar exemption from our *ex parte* rules for the first term of the Task Force); *FCC Announces the Membership and First Meeting of the Re-Chartered Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States*, GN Docket No. 19-329, Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 16828 (WCB 2021) (providing a similar exemption from our *ex parte* rules for the second term of the Task Force).

⁵ 2018 Farm Bill § 12511(b)(3)(A) & (b)(5).

statutory requirements, Chairwoman Rosenworcel has announced that the work of the Task Force and its working groups will include consideration of how connectivity can improve sustainability in agricultural production.⁷

Chairwoman Rosenworcel has designated Michael Adelaine, Ph.D., CIO Emeritus & Special Advisor to the President, *South Dakota State University*, to serve as Chair of the Task Force. Chairwoman Rosenworcel has designated two Vice Chairs: Dr. Sreekala Bajwa, Vice President, Dean & Director, *Montana State University College of Agriculture & Montana Agricultural Experiment Station*; and Ryan Krogh, Global Product Family Business Manager - Combines & FEE, *John Deere*. A full list of Task Force Members appointed to date by the Chairwoman in consultation with the Secretary is attached to this Public Notice.⁸

The primary tasks on the agenda of the Task Force's first meeting will be to introduce members of the Task Force, review the policies relevant to the Task Force's duties, and begin discussing strategies to advance broadband deployment on agricultural land to promote precision agriculture. This agenda may be modified at the discretion of the Task Force Chair and the Designated Federal Officer.

The Task Force meeting will be open to the public and held in the Commission Meeting Room at FCC Headquarters, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. The FCC will accommodate as many live attendees as possible; however, admittance will be limited due to seating availability. The Task Force meeting will also be available on the Internet via live feed from the FCC's web page at www.fcc.gov/live.

Open captioning will be provided for this event. Other reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Requests for such accommodations should be submitted via e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or by calling the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice). Such requests should include a detailed description of the accommodation needed. In addition, please include a way for the FCC to contact the requester if more information is needed to fill the request. Please allow at least five days' advance notice for accommodation requests; last minute requests will be accepted but may not be possible to accommodate.

Members of the public may submit comments to the Task Force in the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System, ECFS, at www.fcc.gov/ecfs. Comments to the Task Force should be filed in GN Docket No. 19-329.

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Commission is responsible for oversight of the Task Force, including its subcommittees and working groups.⁹ As a result, FCC staff or Commissioners may participate in or attend meetings or other activities held by both the Task Force and its subcommittees and working groups. In light of this, we are announcing that, pursuant to section 1.1200(a) of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 1.1200(a), presentations to the Task Force, including to its subcommittees and working groups, and at any roundtable discussions sponsored by the Task Force, as

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⁶ For more information on the working groups, see *FCC Announces and Solicits Nominations for Working Groups of the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States*, GN Docket No. 19-329, Public Notice, 34 FCC Rcd 10496 (WCB 2019).

⁷ See *Rechartering of the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Task Force and Request for Nominations for Membership*, GN Docket No. 19-329, Public Notice, DA 23-739 (WCB rel. Aug. 21, 2023); U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, *Sustainable Agricultural Productivity Growth: What, Why and How* (visited Aug. 8, 2023), <https://www.usda.gov/oce/sustainability/spg-faqs>.

⁸ Section 12511(b)(4)(A)(i) of the 2018 Farm Bill provides that the Task Force will be composed of not more than 15 voting members. Reflecting the requirements of FACA that advisory committees be fairly balanced, this provision of the statute also requires the appointment of representatives of statutorily designated groups with an interest in precision agriculture. Today, we announce the appointment of 13 voting members of the Task Force. We will announce appointments to fill the two remaining seats when the vacancies are filled.

⁹ See 5 U.S.C. Ch. 10.

well as presentations between Task Force members (including members of any subcommittees or working groups) and FCC staff or Commissioners incidental to and in connection with such Task Force meetings or roundtable discussions, will be treated as exempt presentations for *ex parte* purposes. This exemption covers presentations from Task Force members to FCC staff and Commissioners in other settings only to the extent that the Task Force members are presenting the views of the Task Force or its working groups, as opposed to an individual member's own views or that of a member's organization. We find that this modification of the *ex parte* rules is in the public interest because it will allow the Task Force to develop and shape its advice and recommendations to the Commission more efficiently and effectively.

We recognize that some issues may be addressed by the Task Force that are the subject of pending FCC proceedings. The Commission will not rely in these proceedings on any information submitted to the Task Force, or to any of its subcommittees, working groups, or sponsored roundtables, or information conveyed by Task Force members (including members of any subcommittees or working groups) to FCC staff or Commissioners unless that information is first placed in the record of the relevant proceeding.

More information about the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Task Force is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/task-force-reviewing-connectivity-and-technology-needs-precision-agriculture-united-states>. You may also contact Christi Shewman, Designated Federal Officer, at (202) 418-0640, or Christi.Shewman@fcc.gov; Emily Caditz, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, at (202) 418-2268, or Emily.Caditz@fcc.gov; Thomas Hastings, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, at (202) 418-1343, or Thomas.Hastings@fcc.gov.

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MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE**Chair:**

Michael Adelaine, Ph.D., CIO Emeritus & Special Advisor to the President, *South Dakota State University*

Vice Chairs:

Sreekala Bajwa, Ph.D., Vice President, Dean & Director, *Montana State University College of Agriculture & Montana Agricultural Experiment Station*

Ryan Krogh, Global Product Family Business Manager - Combines & FEE, *John Deere*

Members:

Andy Bater, Farmer, *Fifth Estate Growers, LLC*

Timothy Bradford, Jr., Ph.D., Director of Agronomy, *Vayda, Inc.*

Julie Bushell, Chief Executive Officer, Ethos Connected (representing *Irrigation Association*)

Joseph M. Carey, Special Government Employee

Heather Hampton+Knodle, Vice President & Secretary, *Knodle Ltd. Farms*

Carolyn Price, Executive Director, *Upstate New York Towns Association*

Brad Robison, Chief Executive Officer, Tallahatchie Valley Electric Power Association and Tallahatchie Valley Internet Services, LLC; President, MS Fiber (representing the *National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*)

Joshua Seidemann, Vice President, Policy and Industry Innovation, *NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association*

Joy Sterling, Chief Executive Officer, *Iron Horse Vineyards*

Dan Watermeier, Commissioner, First District, *Nebraska Public Service Commission*

Andy Berke, Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, will serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Task Force.

Christi Shewman, Designated Federal Officer
Emily Caditz, Deputy Designated Federal Officer
Thomas Hastings, Deputy Designated Federal Officer